

**Comments on the proposed conservation of *Oncopus* Thorell, 1876 and ONCOPODIDAE Thorell, 1876 (Arachnida, Opiliones)**

(Case 3350; BZN 63: 167–171)

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I found it strange that the names *Oncopus* and ONCOPODIDAE are pre-occupied, but I concur with the authors' view about the inconvenience of using a new name for both taxa since these two names are widely used in the arachnological literature. In addition, I am one of three Editors of a book currently in press with Harvard University Press (*Harvestmen: The Biology of Opiliones*) where both *Oncopus* and ONCOPODIDAE are used, and it would be bad if the names were replaced at the same time that the book came out. It would certainly create unnecessary confusion in the systematic community and would definitely not contribute to the interests of nomenclatural stability.

(2) Similar letters of support for the conservation of *Oncopus* and ONCOPODIDAE were received from Dr Peter Jäger (*Sektion Arachnologie, Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Senckenberganlage 25, D-60325 Frankfurt, Germany (e-mail: Peter.Jaeger@Senckenberg.de)*), Dr. Jürgen Gruber (*Curator of Arachnida (retired), Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, 3 Zoologische Abteilung, Burgring 7, A-1010 Wien, Austria (e-mail: juergen.gruber@nhm-wien.ac.at)*) and Pakawin Dankittipakul (*TIGER Insect Museum, Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden, P.O. Box 7, Mae Rim 50180, Chiang Mai, Thailand (e-mail: pakawin@gmail.com)*).

**Comments on the proposed fixation of the feminine gender of the genus *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801 (Insecta, Coleoptera) and the form of derivation of family-group names based on *Trachys***

(Case 3335; see BZN 63: 172–176, 273–274)

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I do not support the proposed fixation of the feminine gender of *Trachys*. Articles 30.1.2 through 30.1.3 of the Code give clear guidance on determining the gender of genus-group names based on Greek words transliterated to Latin or with a Latin or latinized suffix. The grammatically correct treatment of the name *Trachys* is masculine. This fact was first recognized many years ago, and even Bílý & Kubáň themselves readily acknowledge such in their proposal. Additionally, neither of the exceptions specified in Article 30.1.4 is applicable to *Trachys* – Fabricius did use feminine endings for the included species but did not expressly state that *Trachys* was neither formed from nor treated as a Latin or Greek word, and, as Bílý & Kubáň

have noted, there is no clear indication that *Trachys* or its stem are of common or variable gender. Thus, a masculine treatment is clearly called for. However, instead of accepting this guidance, Bílý & Kubáň invoke a nebulous argument involving 'non-standard names' and the idiosyncrasies of Fabricius's nomenclatural practices in an attempt to justify a feminine treatment. Bílý & Kubáň also do not explain why a feminine treatment for *Trachys* is preferred or why this is in the best interest of stability. They cite a lack of uniformity in interpretation of the gender of *Trachys* in the literature and the desirability to resolve the 'problem' ahead of the completion of several current catalogue projects. However, I interpret this 'lack of uniformity' not so much a result of lingering disagreement over the grammatical correctness of a masculine treatment for *Trachys*, but rather reflecting the belated recognition of this fact. Most of the early literature promulgates Fabricius's original, albeit grammatically incorrect, feminine treatment while a substantial volume of later literature has adopted the more grammatically correct masculine usage.

I am unconvinced by these strained rationalizations for a feminine treatment of *Trachys*. In contrast, the evidence favoring a masculine treatment is clear (i.e. grammatical correctness and conformity with the Code). In my opinion, stability would be best served by maintaining a masculine treatment for *Trachys*. This becomes even more evident when one considers the impact of this question on other buprestid genus-group names ending in '-achys' (e.g. *Brachys*, *Neotrachys*, *Paratrachys*). For *Brachys* in particular, a genus that includes several commonly encountered North American species (e.g. *B. aerosus*, *B. ovatus*, *B. tessellatus*), there has been a preponderance of masculine usage for more than 60 years. Would fixation of the feminine gender for *Trachys* provide a precedent for reversing gender in *Brachys* as well? Or would such precedence apply only to genus-group names expressly derived from *Trachys*? Or will the gender of any genus-group name ending in '-achys' need to be addressed individually by petition? Or are their genders assumed to be masculine, per the Code, unless petitioned otherwise? Such questions, should this 'against-the-rules' application to treat *Trachys* as feminine be accepted, are sure to arise repeatedly and would serve only to undermine uniform interpretation of gender for these other genus-group names. Greater stability will result if rules for transliteration from Greek to Latin are applied properly and consistently, regardless of the extent of any past improper application.

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I am writing to recommend that the proposed fixation of the name *Trachys* to the feminine gender be rejected. *Trachys* is obviously a masculine name, regardless of how it has been treated, and maintaining and standardizing it as masculine creates no nomenclatural disruption. The modification of suffixes to form agreement with the names of genera happens every time a species is transferred to a genus with a different gender. Why should this minor inconvenience force a ruling in one case? I think it is best here to maintain a conservative approach by adhering to the rules and allowing the linguistic facts to determine how we treat a taxon name, rather than following arbitrary post-facto impulses to 'tidy things up'.